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*Use of the Soviet space
station for intelligence
gathering purposes. Tula
Bergman reporting.*

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SPACE

JENNINGS: Three Soviet cosmonauts returned to Earth today. It has been the longest space mission ever. The Soviet news media said the flight has produced important research, including 25,000 photographs of Earth. As ABC's Jules Bergman reports, American officials don't like everything the Soviets have been examining.

BERGMAN: The Salyut 11 spacecraft landed this morning in central Asia in a cloud of dust and the cosmonauts survived a record-breaking 232 days in orbit. They looked and sounded fine after eight months in orbit, which the Soviets say was a productive scientific mission. But Air Force intelligence sources tell ABC News that the Salyut space station, the vehicle the cosmonauts have worked in for nearly eight months, is equipped with high-powered cameras and electronic reconnaissance devices. Salyut has been in orbit for four years and has made thousands of passes over the United States. On almost every pass, U.S. sources say its cameras were trained on military targets. The U.S. knows this by intercepting radio signals from the spacecraft. Under observation were major military bases, including Edwards Air Force Base in California and the nuclear submarine-building yards at Groton, Conn. Salyut has also performed another form of intelligence, electronically intercepting the signals from U.S. spy satellites and infrared early-warning satellites, so the Russians know just what it is we know. That way they can change their methods of disguising key military installations. The U.S. has plans to do the same thing. Today the crew of the shuttle flight scheduled for this Friday arrived at Cape Canaveral. One of their tasks will reportedly be to get pictures of Soviet military targets. Jules Bergman, ABC News, New York.